

AN UNKNOWN CITIZEN OF TWO WORLDS

By

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Written in 1931, shortly before his death

and

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Re-edited in 1972 by his granddaughter, Lillian White Swank

As a tribute to his courage, intelligence, and honesty
In his 73-year quest

For

TRUTH and RIGHT

Part 1

(From 1865 to 1872)

We were very poor. There were seven children, but bread for only three. Hollow-cheeked Jack was our chief cook, for my father earned exceedingly little. I cannot recall the time when I was not hungry. One day, when I chanced to be in a neighbor's kitchen, while "feed" was being cooked for the pigs, I fished out some of the potatoes that had not yet been mixed with the rotten eggs, in order to lessen my gnawing hunger.

I often went to school without anything to eat. Throughout the school term, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoon, my brother Wilhelm and I trudged two miles or more to the public forests, to get the wood that was needed to cook our potatoes, if such there were. Black bread and potatoes were practically our only food. We had a tiny garden; so, now and then there was a vegetable; and on Sunday perhaps a bit of meat. I think I was about fifteen years of age when I tasted butter for the first time.

In 1866 there was a famine in Germany, caused in the first place by the wicked war between North Germany (Prussia), South Germany, and Austria; and in the second place by a dismal failure of the crops. All summer long it rained. Everything rotted in the fields. Then indeed did Starvation and Hunger stalk through the land. To me, to be sure, that was nothing new.

Our bread was made of pea flour and midlings. Distinctly I remember watching my mother, as she mixed midlings with water, rolled the combination in her hands, about as one would sausage, and then baked it right on the top of the stove, without any grease--in her desperate attempt to feed the seven hungry mouths around her. These were called Schuppnudeln. So much for the starvation year of 1866, the year of the birth of the German Empire--a gala year for German nobility and royalty!

I used to run errands for other people to the city, two and one-half hours away. For this I received a few pfennigs (one-fourth of a cent), with which bread was bought for the family. Very often I was kept out of school, and even when I was allowed to attend, I was frequently called away to perform such services, in order to earn those starvation pennies. At that time, you see, school attendance was optional, but to me it was a glorious privilege. At night I pored over any printed matter I could get hold of, by the light afforded by the burning of a piece of rag, soaked in grease of some sort. And many a time have I been beaten for such extravagance. But for the chance to read, I was willing to pay that price.

In the years 1867, 1868, 1869, and 1870, a railroad was built close by, and although I was but twelve years old, I obtained work there. At my mother's request, I was permanently withdrawn from school. I received a mark a day (about twenty-five cents), working from five in the morning to seven in the evening--rain or shine. That helped to buy more bread! The railway was completed in the course of the summer of 1871, and so I, too, was jobless. Consequently, now again there was less bread for that family of nine.

Once in a while I found a little work among the farmers during the harvest season, digging potatoes, etc., for a few hunger pennies. When I had nothing else to do, I walked to the distant forests to gather and carry home on my head huge bundles of twigs and branches, with which to fight off the bitter cold and to cook our meager supply of food. Thus life went on until January 1872. And I may add that I still received almost as many beatings as pieces of the bread I helped earn.

At that date we moved to Sulzbach in the Saar region. There things went no better either at first--no work, no money, or credit. Luckily, we had brought a few sacks of potatoes along. And my mother still had several fine linen tablecloths, left her by her mother and treasured as her only possessions of value. These she sold for Bread.

We lived in two rooms; all nine of us slept in one room, in two beds of ordinary size and a little trundle bed. It was so crowded that it was impossible to turn.

Part 11

(From 1872 to Feb. 25, 1881)

I obtained work at the glass factory at one mark (twenty-five cents) a day. My job was to excavate with shovel and hoe for the foundation of a new building. Until the first pay-day there was very little to eat in the house. You see, every pfennig I had ever earned was turned over to my parents. After about six months I was hired as apprentice in the glass factory itself, sixteen hours a day, for the munificent sum of 21 marks a month (\$5.25). In the spring of 1873 I became blower's second helper at 33 marks a month, thirteen hours a day. And in the spring of 1874, I was promoted to the position of second helper in a place, requiring far greater responsibility and heavier work, at 54 marks a month. I was now the real bread-winner of the family. At this time Wilhelm was also hired as apprentice at 25 marks a month. So for once we were not hungry!

Now comes something that even to this very day I look back upon with genuine horror. My father borrowed from the owner of the factory 300 marks in order to pay some of his debts, and gave me as SECURITY--me, his own son, body and soul--signed over to my taskmaster for three years of my life! The debt was decreased by deducting seven and one-half marks a month from my wages, until it was paid in full. This took three and one-half years! In addition, my parents, who sold me into bondage to pay their debts, withheld all the rest of my earnings for food and lodging. In other words, my own parents (God give them Eternal Rest!) exploited-bled me, their flesh and blood!

Many a time when I had worked all day long and had just gone to my share of the bed, the night watchman came and called me to take the place of another workman, who had failed to report. I know that twice I worked thirty-six hours at a stretch, two days and one night. When the time was up, I could scarcely crawl home--more dead was I than alive!

Thus was I exploited. I was the oldest, and I have always been also the smallest in the family. No wonder! Worked to death in the days of my youth!

That was my life until in the spring of 1875 I obtained a position as the glass-blower's first helper. I was then seventeen and one-half years of age, bore the responsibility and performed the work of a full-grown man. The first month at the job I earned 96 marks. Such a thing had never before been heard of. A little fellow like me earn 96 marks!

But every pfennig and mark of that sum went, as had all others, to my parents. Now there was no longer any lack of Bread. Now for the first time we all had enough to eat!

For a year this continued. Then the glass factory and the blow furnace, at which I worked, was closed down. I was transferred as reserve man to another furnace. I no longer earned as much money as before--only about 75 marks a month; and the work was just the same, only I toiled at a different place each day. But on and on I struggled until early in February of 1881. Then I suffered a severe attack of Wanderlust, for many people were going to America. I, too, wanted to go--but no MONEY!

One evening (I shall never forget it!) the neighbor girl I had come to love (now your Mother) said to me: "My father will lend you enough money to take you to America." Instantly I accepted the unbelievable offer. Her father gave me 200 marks, her step-mother 150 marks. That was on Saturday, Feb. 5, 1881.

On Monday next I took a train to Saarbruecken (now the most important industrial city in the Saar basin, whose precious coal mines and valuable timber tracts were given by the treaty of Versailles as a prize of war to the French, at least until the plebiscite of 1935). There I gave to the German military control notice of my intended departure, for I was subject to the three-year compulsory military service laws of those days. Then, I bought a suit-case, a cheap overcoat, and a few other small necessities.

When I returned that evening, there was weeping and wailing. Full well did my parents know that the real support of their big family was going away, never to return. To my mother I gave 60 marks of my "Freedom Money"; that left about 210 marks for my venture into the Unknown.

Early next morning (it is just 50 years ago today - 1931) I bade farewell to my parents, brothers, and sisters, to your maternal grandparents, who had advanced the money for my Break to Freedom; and last of all, to my first and only love, your mother!

On the first morning train, at five o'clock, I rode to Forbach, Lorraine, and bought my ticket. It read from Nancy-on-the-Mosel on the French frontier, via Paris, Le Havre, to New York! You see, no agent in Germany was allowed to sell a ticket to a foreign country to a young man, for he might be liable for service in that monstrous military machine, to which the German youth had to sacrifice its years, and later--in the World War--its life. Therefore, the trip to Forbach, where a Frenchman took care of the ticket sale secretly. As

a precautionary measure, my traveling upon German territory had to be done at night. I reached the French frontier station at about one o'clock in the morning and had to wait until nine a.m. at the customs-house, until a French police commissioner OK'ed my passage through France.

On the evening of the ninth of February I arrived in Paris at the Gare de Este. Now, the agent in Forbach had referred me to the Hotel New York. So, of a loafer in the depot I inquired as to its location. "O owi, monsieur!" Then upon claiming my suit-case, I found that the lock had been broken and my clothes (many alas! I did not possess) had been searched; but fortunately, nothing had been stolen. Probably just an extra precaution on the part of a zealous French customs inspector on the baggage-car. I might add that I had no underclothes, had never owned any. All my earthly possessions I carefully gathered together and followed the two "bums," my would-be guide and his friend. How great was the chagrin of the lad who had never before in all his life been in a large city to discover the hotel of his inquiry right across the street!

I thought my French pilots were unusually friendly to a German stranger. And they seemed very much at home in the hotel, for immediately they sat down at a table and casually ordered coffee with cognac. Lo, and behold! the next evening when I checked out, there on my bill glared the item:

2 coffee with cognac 1 1/2 franc

That day I bought two straps to fasten about my suit-case, so that I could carry it more easily. The clerk said that they would cost ten francs (\$2). But that was not the case; upon painstakingly counting my change later, I found that I had been charged thirty francs. My few marks were melting away like snow before the sun!

At eleven, on the evening of the tenth of February, 1881, I left Paris, and at eight a.m. on the following day I arrived at Le Havre, where I was to see my first ship--the ship that was to bear me to my New World!

It was a cold, wet morning. A barker escorted me to an "immigrants'" hotel. I was shown to a large room with about ten or twelve beds, five or six on each side. As there were four men assigned to each bed, in shifts of two, sleep was out of the question. Besides I did not dare lose consciousness for a single second, although I had ridden on a hard wooden bench all night long, for I was afraid that my few marks would be stolen. And then I could never reach America!

After trying to rest a few hours in spite of the League of Nations smells and snores, I rose in disgust, wrote several letters to those I had left behind in Germany, hunted up the post-office, took a walk to the harbor, and gazed at the ship, that for about two weeks was to be my home. After dark I stayed in the hotel for fear of pick-pockets.

Early next morning things began to hum. You see, when an "immigrant" registered at the hotel, he surrendered his steamship ticket as security for his hotel obligations. So immediately after breakfast our names were called out, one at a time, and as soon as the "guest" had paid his bill, he was given back his ticket to the Promised Land.

At eight o'clock we marched to the harbor. What a mass of interesting human beings! How could they ever get on one boat? But pack them all in the crew did--all the young men in the forecastle, families in the middle, and the young unmarried girls in the stern of the ship. At that time vessels were built quite differently from ours of today. All passengers were quartered below deck. First deck was for first and second cabin; second deck for us immigrants and crew. As I went down the second flight of stairs, I thought I would be completely overcome by the odor of chloride of lime that greeted my inexperienced nostrils.

At ten o'clock our ship of 3000 tons--Canada by name--part steamboat, part sailboat, was "untied." The harbor of Havre is fortified, and consequently ships must pass through a lock near the fort to get to the open sea. Now we shout, "Adieu, Europe! Adieu, Loved Ones!" And as an unruly lump rises in my throat and tears blind my eyes, I determinedly turn my face towards the Land of My Dreams--with almost empty pockets!

That was February 12, 1881. The sea was very rough, and by noon I was seasick. At four p.m. we could see the southern tip of England, and from that point on the weather was bad, as it always is at this season of the year. The waves broke over the deck. The only spot on deck where one had any shelter at all was on the port side. But for five days I was very ill and lay in my bunk, like most of the other victims.

Our quarters were right at the stairway, two "floors" below. Ten bunks formed a section. The bunks, about two feet wide, were built in tiers of five. In this section, approximately thirty by thirty, there were sixty young men, thirty assigned to each side.

As many were sick, the stench of lime and regurgitation was horrible. The weather was so disagreeable that the passengers were not permitted on deck. During the first four or five days I wanted nothing to eat, but my appetite soon returned after I once found my "sea-legs and stomach."

Perhaps you might like a more detailed description of the boat. In front at the first mast in the middle was the chart room. Above that were the bridge and the captain's cabin. To the left was the butcher shop; to the right, the room where flags and signal lights were kept. In the stern were the officers' quarters. Then came the Caboose (kitchen) and bakery.

To each group of ten men was given a metal check, bearing a number as means of identification. We had to get our own food, water, etc. These supplies were handed down to us at certain designated times upon presentation of the check. Every day two members of our group had to take care of the duties of the day; namely: at 7:30 fetch breakfast, consisting of bread and coffee; at 10:00 about one-half gallon drinking water; at noon and in the evening, dinner and supper, respectively; then later in the evening another one-half gallon of water. Dinner consisted of potatoes, a little meat, rice pudding, and a tiny glass of wine. Each of us received about a pound of bread per day. In the evening we had some thin soup and another glass of wine. Tableware included a tin cup, plate, spoon for each, and two large vessels, in which the food was carried down from the kitchen on deck.

Of course, we had to wash our own dishes. The water for this delightful operation had to be brought from the kitchen, too. Ropes were stretched about the deck so that we could keep our footing. Sometimes, in spite of this precaution, our amateur waiters fell down, spilling all the food for the ten hungry members of this group. Then we had to go without our share until time for the next meal.

On the tenth day near the coast of Newfoundland, we ran into a tremendous (and my first) American blizzard. It lasted three days. Now we stood on our heads, now we sprawled on the uncertain floor. The ship looked like a huge iceberg. To this day I wonder that the ship was not pulled down to the bottom of the sea by the additional weight of the ice that completely covered it.

On the fourteenth day at 1:00 a.m. we entered the lower harbor of New York and anchored there. At seven a.m. the doctor and custom officers came on board, and at midday after quarantine inspection, we sailed on to Castle Garden. And there I first set foot on American soil. And with what a mixture of emotions!

After registration at Castle Garden, I changed my German currency, for which I received twenty dollars--all I had left. I sent a telegram to Detroit to an old acquaintance, inquiring as to whether there might be work for me there. That cost one dollar. Then with several other immigrants I went to a cheap hotel, waited all day long for an answer to my message--but none came.

So towards evening, I purchased a ticket to Detroit, paid my hotel bill, and for the trip bought some bread and a piece of bacon. That was Saturday, February 26. As I stood on the ferryboat going from New York to the Jersey City Station, the tears of fear and despair could no longer be controlled; and I, although hardened into full manhood at fifteen, broke down and cried like a child. My money had shrunk to just two dollars. A young man, also from Sulzbach, asked me what the trouble was; and when I told him, he kindly loaned me four dollars. Thus I began life in America--\$84 in debt!

Part 111

(From February 25, 1881, the day on which I first set foot on American soil, until the present, 1931)

The immigrant train left the Pennsylvania Station in Jersey City at seven o'clock p.m. For two hours during the long night we remained switched on a siding, and then those hard seats seemed more uncomfortable than ever. Next morning we arrived at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. There I bought a tin of coffee for ten cents, ate for breakfast some of my bread and raw bacon. In the evening at nine we came to Pittsburg. And at twelve-thirty a.m. the tiresome journey continued via Crestline, Mansfield, to Toledo, Ohio.

In Toledo I had to wait from noon until six p.m. Then I was packed into an omnibus with a German family that I had never seen before, and transferred to another station. That was my first piece of luck. At nine in the evening I stood all alone on the platform at Detroit, with my bit of baggage and six dollars. NOW--"Where to?"

The German family, I noticed, was met by some man. I said to myself: "Where they go, there shall I also go." For when one has no money and cannot speak the foreign language, there is no choice to be made. The family and the stranger boarded a street-car. I followed right at their heels, whither I knew not.

On Grogan Street they left the car, and I trailed them to a cheap boarding-house kept by a German. The landlord asked me what I wanted, and I told him that I wished to put up there for the night. He replied that he had no room for me. I begged him to allow me to sleep on the floor. He said I would freeze to death; but I insisted upon staying nevertheless.

The family and their guide sat down at the table to eat. I sat down, too; and Oh! how wonderful everything tasted after those 52 interminable hours on trains. I tell you, I was famished! After the meal the German family left. I never saw them again.

After they were gone, the landlord said I might sleep with another boarder. This offer I accepted with gratitude. I do not know what I would have done, if I had not been transferred on that omnibus with that German family. Perhaps I might have spent the night in the Detroit waiting-room, if that had been permitted.

Well, next morning after breakfast, I asked the landlord where the glass factory was. His answer was that he had never heard of a glass factory in Detroit. For me that was a terrific blow. I proceeded to go to the factory district in search of it, walked up and down along the river for miles, and finally came to Woodward Avenue, the most important business street in Detroit. At the lower end of it I met a mail carrier. I mustered up all of my English vocabulary, consisting of just two words, and mumbled as best I could: "Blitz Glass Works." He said something in reply, but what it was I did not know. When I fell back upon the sign language, he pointed up the street. But I could not see any factory there, only large warehouses. So I concluded that he had not understood me. Later, however, I learned that the company's warehouse and office were located there.

All morning long, I wandered up and down the street. At noon I decided to turn my weary feet boarding-houseward. Luckily after a long while I found Grogan Street again; and my landlord expressed great surprise at the fact that I had not lost my way in all my vain search.

As I ate my dinner, he told me that he had learned where the glass factory was; that it was not in Detroit at all, but in Del Ray, five or six miles south of the city. He also told me how to get to Del Ray; namely, take the street-car to the end of Fort Wayne. This would cost eight cents, and from that point I would have to walk a mile along the river.

I left my belongings at the boarding-house and followed his directions, found Fort Wayne Street and the way to Del Ray. That meant a pleasant stroll through the first forest I had come across since leaving my Home Land. (This tract now belongs to the city of Detroit.) As soon as I came out of the woods, I saw in the distance Del Ray and the glass factory. On the way a young man joined me; he spoke to me, but, of course, I could not understand him. However, when I finally made him understand that I was looking for a man by the name of Ackerman, he showed me the house where he lived; for Del Ray at that time boasted only twenty or thirty houses. Today Del Ray is the home of the world famous Ford Plant.

And thus I found my old friend. He told me that he had sent me a telegram, but for some reason or other, I had failed to receive it. That cost me another dollar, which I paid later. But my friend had further bad news for me: On that very day the glass factory had shut down! It was to remain closed for necessary repairs for six weeks.

Now--what now? No work in sight and only four dollars left! My friend took me to the only boarding-house in Del Ray and told me to stay there until something turned up. But I could not live on that sum, for I had just money enough for one week's expenses plus fifty cents. The next day, March 2, I rode back to Detroit to get my belongings and returned to Del Ray. On the third of March I wrote several letters to Germany. On the fourth of March I walked towards Detroit in a frantic search for work and applied at all factories along the river. There weren't many of them. Mostly lumber yards and shipyards in those days. It was winter, you know, and everything was at a standstill.

When I was asked what I wanted (I suppose that is what was said, for I still could not understand any English) I said the one word, "work!" Usually there was a mere shake of the head or sometimes a cruel laugh. Another fearful experience for me! In a lumberyard I found a dime. On and on I tramped all day until evening found me back at Del Ray--literally dead-tired. What was I to do? No one could either help or advise me.

So on the following day, March 5, I decided to force my way somehow to the owner of the factory, Louis Blitz, a Jew. I did succeed in seeing him, told him of my circumstances, and fairly demanded that he give me work, even though the plant was not being operated. He spoke to his manager, but I could not "get" their conversation. Then he turned to me and told me to report the next Monday.

So I went to work with the expectation that I would receive the same wages as did the other workers. Great was therefore my disappointment, when on pay-day, Saturday, the manager, also a Jew, handed me the mere sum of three dollars--or fifty cents a day! I told him that I could not work for that, since I had to pay three dollars and fifty cents for board, not including my laundry. Finally, he agreed to give me fifty cents more. That left me without an extra penny. Later he did pay me four dollars a week.

This lasted for seven weeks, until the factory resumed operations. I was given work as blower's helper, or as they say here in America, "gatherer," with a Swede as master. As the process was quite different from that which I had learned in Germany, I did not get along very well at first. However, in a few weeks' time I got my head and hands "in" and earned fifty-eight dollars the first month.

(But I am a bit ahead of my story. I must go back a little way.)

After I had been in Del Ray but five weeks, even before the factory opened up, I received the first letter from my parents; in it they complained that they had absolutely no money, that Wilhelm would not give them any of his wages, that the manager of the glass factory had dismissed my brother, Johann, right after I had left, and that my father was sick with tuberculosis. What was I to do?

As I had nothing even for myself, good advice again was hard to come by. At last, a German glassblower offered to lend me fifteen dollars. Gratefully I accepted the money. That brought my debts up to ninety-nine dollars! Wasn't this a fine prospect for a foreigner? The next day I went to the Detroit post office, asked for an international money order application blank, and filled it out all by myself.

Now back to my chronological trail! As I stated above, I earned fifty-eight dollars the first month. I was paid ten dollars per week, out of which I paid my board and laundry. Immediately I began to apply the balance on my debts. At the end of the month I received the remaining eighteen dollars; that made up the fifty-eight dollars. In the meantime I received word that the money had arrived in Germany, but also that the need of my people was very great and that my money was positively all they had to live on. So I sent them another fifteen dollar money order. That left just three dollars of my month's wages. However, out of my weekly balance I had already sent to Pittsburg the four dollars that I had borrowed from my friend on the ferryboat to Jersey City. Thus my debts were reduced to eighty dollars.

The weather turned very hot, and the factory closed again on the first of July. About the middle of the month a balance of twenty-two dollars was paid me, for in June I had succeeded in earning sixty-two dollars. By this date I received another "Gimme letter" and forwarded once more to my parents fifteen out of my precious twenty-two dollars. Since that left practically nothing for me to live on, I had to start out again in search of work.

At that time a glue factory was being built about a mile from Del Ray on the bank of the Rouge River. Workmen were being hired at fifteen cents per hour. I went to the office, was taken on, but had to buy a shovel for one dollar. I was then assigned to a gang of Negroes with a Negro as my boss! There were "board and bunkhouse" accommodations at fifty cents a day, the bed and bedding consisting of a creepy mattress on the floor.

I worked a week, and since I was not used to the hot sun, my whole back was burned so badly that my skin came off with my shirt. But Saturday came, and with it--Pay-Day! When the pay-off took place, my name was not on the list, and the Negro boss had disappeared! I had worked an entire week in the sickening sun, had paid out my last four dollars--three for board and one for a shovel--all for nothing! That's the racket worked on a greenhorn!

What in Heaven's name was I to do now?

I went back to Del Ray, hunted up the Jew again and obtained a job as day-laborer at one dollar per day. My work was as follows: The Jew had contracted for twelve schooners of sand--at six hundred tons per loading. The sand was brought from Lake St. Clair; and it required from five to six days for the boat to make the round trip. The sand was unloaded upon the dock, and my job was to haul the sand from the dock to the sandshed--in a wheelbarrow. Or, in other words, I had to remove by manual labor one hundred tons of sand every day, so that the dock would be empty when the sailboat returned. That was no child's play! No one else would tackle the back-breaking job; otherwise I should not have landed it. But with me the case was: "Birdie, eat or die!"

So I slaved on until the end of August. Then one day the Jew came out to me and said that if I wanted a place as helper for the next "fire," I would have to work for ten per cent less wages than the others, for he did not know that even at that time I belonged to the union. I refused to underbid my fellow-workers, and as a result lost my job hauling sand.

Now--what next?

Some fellow-workmen advised me to go to New Castle, Pennsylvania, or Pittsburg. That was doubtless good counsel; but where was the fare to come from? My bed-fellow asked me how much money I had. My all consisted of five dollars. He said he would lend me four dollars. So, on the twenty-ninth of August I made the trip by boat from Detroit to Cleveland. From there I went to New Castle by rail. In that city there were two glass factories, but I failed to land anything. Consequently, I took the next train to Pittsburg, where I arrived at nine on the evening of August 30 at the Lake Erie Station, with a little over one dollar in my pocket!

What now? Where to? I had obtained the address of a young man with whom I had worked in Germany. I looked up the place, which was not far from the depot. It was called the Fisher Boarding-House. I asked if the young man was at home and was informed that he was working on the night shift. I inquired whether I might spend the night there. In reply I was asked if I had work; to this I answered in the negative. Then--"Nothing doin'!"

However, the woman sent her son with me to the factory on South Third Street, where my friend was at work. I found him at his job and asked him if he couldn't help me out for the night, or until I obtained work. He said that he had an aunt living on Sarah Street. I took a street-car and located the house. When I told the woman who had sent me, she kindly gave me something to eat, for I was so very hungry, having had almost nothing to eat for twenty-eight hours. I shared the bed that night with another man; bed-bugs came in for their share, too.

The next morning the woman gave me my breakfast. Then I started out to look for work. At that time there were nineteen glass factories in South Pittsburg. At the upper end I began my search for a job; that was the first of September, the day on which factories started operations after the summer shut-down. These factories were scattered over the whole South side. From one factory to the other I walked, but everywhere I was told, "Filled up!" Every day it was the same story until Thursday, when I ran across an opening on Twelfth Street. But the blower did not want to take me on, because I was a foreigner. However, the manager, who happened to be a German, persuaded him to try me out for a few days. That very night I started to work. But since it was too far to walk to Twenty-Eighth Street, I hunted up a boarding-house nearer the factory. This time, I had no difficulty, for now I had work.

But I had to learn my trade all over again, as this factory was one of the old-fashioned types; I have never seen any equipment more dangerous to the life of the workman. However, I got onto the ropes better than I had anticipated; and it seemed as if everyone was satisfied with my work, for on the following Friday I was paid twelve dollars. That was the most money that I

had ever received in one week. The first thing I did was to go to the old woman on Twenty-Eighth Street and pay her in full for all the meals and lodging she had advanced to me.

The first month I earned seventy dollars; ten per cent of that sum was deducted by the union for "strike benefits." Now I felt prosperous--yes, more than that, I felt independent, because I had work, and the prospects were that I never again should suffer from want. Every month I sent my parents money; and in December I sent your grandfather the whole sum he had loaned me for my chance at Another World--with interest. Now I was free from Debt! In such times as those, and in the face of all my hard luck, that, I feel, was a pretty fair record.

On the nineteenth of January, 1882, my father died of tuberculosis. My first Pittsburg letter, which I received about two weeks later, was naturally a very sad one. I sent twenty-five dollars for the funeral expenses. Then came a letter from a man in Sulzbach, containing a statement for twenty-five marks, that my father had borrowed from him. I paid him, too. Later I was quite sick for a week; dysentery, evidently caused by impure water.

In March, my betrothed, your Mother, accompanied by her brother, arrived from Europe. She obtained a position with a family on Congress Street; your uncle worked as baker in Market Street. In June the factory closed down for the summer. Up to that time, in spite of expenditures for food, lodging, clothing, debts, support of my parents, I had saved two hundred and fifty dollars. I really feel that I had accomplished a great deal in a short time in a foreign land. But I had not wasted a single penny. I went nowhere, went neither with nor in any company, allowed myself no recreation that cost money.

So, on June 30, 1882, we were married, my betrothed and I, and we began to keep house at 144 Twentieth Street, South Pittsburg. There Ida was born April 11, 1883. In September when the factories started up again, I obtained a better job and earned about ten dollars more per month. All went well until in the fall of '83 a strike broke out. Now, when the factory closed in June, we had about three hundred dollars. By fall that was pretty well used up. I managed to find an odd job here and there till cold weather set in. Then I began to sell glass tableware in the Pittsburg market. This I exhibited on a little table, behind which I stood from morning till night. At noon I bought five cents' worth of doughnuts. I earned eight or nine dollars per week. That kept the wolf from our humble door. In this way, when the factory opened up again February 14, 1884, we had no debts.

But here I must retrace my steps once more, back to the fall of '83, when your uncle came to us quite ill. I called a physician, who pronounced it a case of typhoid fever. Now--what now? No work--and a critically ill brother-in-law in our home. We had but two rooms; and Ida was about seven months old. We all slept in one room. There were so many extra expenses, too--milk, fresh eggs at forty-five cents a dozen, medicine, disinfectants, etc. Finally I wrote to your maternal grandfather and explained to him the situation, not for our sakes, but for the sake of his son, your uncle. Just about the time the latter was almost well again, I received from his father one hundred marks. This sum I gave your uncle, thinking he would surely return half of it for the great expense we had incurred while taking care of him all those harrowing weeks, day and night. But not one cent! He calmly pocketed the money. All

he did was to pay the doctor bill, and that was very reasonable and just; for the physician knew that we were poor, that I had no job, and that my brother-in-law had no reserve, for when he did work, he earned only two dollars per week in excess of the cost of his actual necessities. I feel that that was not a square deal, since we nursed him personally, your Mother did all of the extra work, and we had to burn more fuel to prevent his contracting pneumonia. It cost us at least fifty dollars, for he lived two whole months at our home. But he paid us nothing for it all; and I never asked him for a cent, either.

By this time, the weather turned disagreeable and cold; but I kept on selling glassware at the roofless market until Christmas. Then I was forced to give it up, as I could not endure the bitter cold out in the open any longer.

Now I began something new. I chanced to become acquainted with the gentleman who taught German in the Twenty-Eighth ward school. I told him that I wanted very much to improve my ability to speak English and also to learn to read and write the language. He kindly suggested that I buy a slate and certain books and report to the elementary school, at which he was teaching. So every day I attended morning and afternoon sessions in the school-house on South Fourteenth Street with the little children of our neighborhood. How eagerly I worked at these childish reading lessons, starting with the first grade and proceeding as fast as I could. Every day the principal, a lady, came into the room, listened to my recitations and was greatly surprised at my steady progress. And I was greatly pleased.

That wonderful experience lasted but six weeks, for there was work at the factory again, and it continued until June 30, 1884. During the summer I heard that a new glass factory was being built at Barnesville, Ohio. And since I did not like Pittsburg, because its lack of sunshine and its superabundance of smoke and soot were endangering our health, I thought it might perhaps be better if we should go elsewhere. (And how glad I am to this very day that I made the move!) In this big city the cost of living was so high that we had no chance at all of getting on financially.

So at the beginning of August I took the trip to Barnesville. I wanted to see just what sort of a place it was. I looked it over thoroughly and liked the location. As I believed it would please your Mother, too, I accepted a position, and on the fourteenth of August, 1884, we landed in Barnesville.

I knew I could not earn as much as I had in Pittsburg; but necessities would cost less, and we would have plenty of fresh air. For three days I ran about, hunting a place for us to live. Finally I found the little farm of ten acres that Coons bought later. Here we lived until April 1, 1887, and here Tillie and Anna were born. Then the place was sold, Mr. Coon buying it for \$2050. I had asked Mr. Ed. Bradfield, President of the First National Bank, to buy it for us. But as he refused to bid more than \$2000 for it, we had to look sharp for another house that we could rent. Since that proved to be a real problem, we decided to buy the adjoining farm of the same size, where we lived for thirty-seven years. The Coons and the Squirrels (Eichhorn) became fast friends and remained such till Death broke the bond some forty years later.

As we had been extremely "thrifty," we were in a position to agree to pay \$1000 cash down and \$500 more within eighteen months. And we fulfilled that

condition on schedule time. In 1885 my mother died, and again I paid the burial expenses.

(Note: The greatest of all ambitions was to become a naturalized citizen of the United States, and in 1888, when the necessary legal proceedings were complete, he pledged himself a full-fledged American citizen, of which he was quite proud and true-blue.)

In the year 1888 I was promoted to a better position, in which I earned twelve to fifteen dollars more per month. So, in 1890 we planned to have a new home built. I built first and counted the money afterwards; I should have counted first and built afterwards. But in those days I was still so dumb. Consequently, when our attractive new house and landscaping were completed, we were up to our ears in debt. I had never given a thought to the possibility of bad times. But they came!

In the year 1891 I took the position of glassblower, since I had to earn more money, not only to pay our debts, plus seven per cent interest, but also to rear our family of five children decently. Through '91-92-93 I earned about \$1000 per year; there was also some income from the farm.

But in May, 1893, came the Big Crash in Wall Street! The factory closed without warning, and everything went and stayed on the rocks for more than two years. (Compare: Crash of 1929.) Then again was sound advice precious--debts and a family of eight! That called for some "scratching," both of the head and of the soil. Thanks to your Mother, who knew how to make new clothes out of old, we managed until October of 1895, when the factory opened up again, with a wage reduction of thirty-four per cent. That was a big cut; but as everything was cheaper, we did not suffer from want. Then, too, we had a great deal of fruit to sell. During this panic I sold apples at twenty-five CENTS a bushel.

In January 1896 the furnaces were out for thirty days. And at the end of the month your infant brother, Albert, developed double pneumonia, and on the fifth of February the dear little fellow died.

By spring of that year we had paid all of our debts. That's when I bought the piano. From then on, the factory business grew better each year, and each year I earned a bit more. A mighty good thing it was, too; for our family of nine growing youngsters cost us more and more. In the summer of 1898 the Eastern Ohio Glass Company was organized. I bought three shares at one hundred dollars per share on the installment plan. The first reason for this unusual move on my part was: I wanted to become MANAGER. And so I made bold to toss my humble working-man's cap in the ring, where it lay with eight more pretentious specimens of head-gear. My second reason was: Thought I, if Plan Number One falls through, then I shall ask for a better job as glassblower on the grounds that I now am a stock-holder.

Plan Number Two worked; I was defeated as manager; but I did receive a better position. However, the work was far harder; but I made up my mind to see the job through, even though I dropped dead in my tracks. Sometimes I could hardly drag my body--exhausted by the heavy labor and terrific furnace blast--those two long miles home. But I earned more money; and money was the thing.

In May 1896 your maternal grandfather died of heart disease--the man who had had enough faith and confidence in me to gamble his precious, hard-earned savings on my venture across the sea! Of his modest estate, divided among lawyers, his second wife, and six children and step-children, your Mother received four hundred and fifty dollars. With this bequest we added two rooms to the west side of our home, thus providing more room for our fast maturing brood.

And so life went on until 1904 or 1905. Then wages began to go down, because machines were being introduced. Finally, under the leadership of the inexperienced manager, the company gave up its manufacture of hand-made glass. After standing idle for many years, the plant went into bankruptcy, was sold under the jurisdiction of the court, and of the proceeds I received forty-five dollars, or fifteen per cent of my three hundred dollar investment. However, since the first five years had brought in satisfactory dividends, the loss was not so great; and besides I had earned more money than ever before. This I could not have done under any other circumstances; so my bold investment proved sound after all.

From 1907 on we had to slave to get our whole means of support out of the soil. That was the case until the World War broke out. Then farm produce prices soared. When America was drawn into the war against my fatherland, I invested all of our savings in Liberty Bonds, mostly on the weekly payment plan. By this time all of you fledglings had hopped or flown out of the home nest by the college or university route, leaving only Mother and me on the "home-stead."

In the year 1920 I became blind in my left eye and underwent a painful operation for cataract; that cost a pile of hard-earned cash and did little good. Two years later I had to take your mother to the Wheeling hospital; and the next year she fell and fractured a bone in her leg; a similar accident had befallen me, too, just before Christmas of 1917. Because of these untoward incidents, I now decided that it was high time that I sold the old home place, for the work was getting too much for us, and climbing up and down the hill was no longer as easy for us old folks as it once had been.

Your brother Karl said that he would buy the farm; and we promptly agreed upon the purchase price. However, I reserved the right for your Mother and me to continue to live in the house where we had reared our brood, now scattered in the United States and Canada. Or, we further agreed, if the two families of different generations did not get along harmoniously, we should have the right to build a small home on the place. When in the fall of 1924 Karl was ready to move in with his family, he and his wife wrote that they planned to divide the old home as follows: your Mother and I were to occupy the rear of the house; they, the front part. Now that did not suit your Mother at all, for she had no desire to play second fiddle in that home of our thirty-four-year struggle and sacrifice.

Well, what was to be done?

I chanced to know that the place in Tacoma, where we now live, was for sale; but I did not want to pay the price asked, since I realized that it would take almost all that we had. However, as you girls promised that you would help us if we needed any financial assistance, I bought the "shack," where we now dwell in comfort and contentment. And I am glad I did so, for I think that we won't have long to live together, and what a Paradise it is for us with its birds,

flowers, and vistas of distant-green hills in this sunset of Life! Everything went well in our new home until on the morning of August 3, 1927, there came the hardest blow of our whole existence, the telegram informing us of the sudden death of our beloved Lillian, the second youngest, just a few hours after the birth of her first child. Here again I tear open a wound that has never healed and never will heal. One consolation we do have: The dear God left to us her image and allowed her to go on with her mother's thread of life. Every time we see Little Lillian we see our daughter again.

The last three years we have been living in the enjoyment of good health; that is, health as good as can be expected in the case of folks in their seventies. But last fall your Mother suffered from a stroke of paralysis. However, she has now fully recovered; and I hope there will never be a repetition of that condition.

Thus we face the End of Life; and we both trust that when our time does come, we shall not be tortured with lingering illness. When we are gone to that THIRD WORLD, from which there is no return passage, remember us in your prayers. Live in Peace with One Another.